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## **Pathology of Patriarchy and Family Inequalities**

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## **The Pathology of Patriarchy and Family Inequalities**

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## **The Pathology of Patriarchy and Family Inequalities**

Everyone in the world belongs to at least two families: the one in to which we were born and the ones we create in adulthood. Underlying this shared global experience is a wealth of individual diversity in how family shapes us emotionally, physically, and economically throughout our lives and, in turn, the lives of our children. The first goal of this chapter is to present a holistic conceptual frame for comparing the group inequalities in inputs, family processes, and outcomes discussed in the other chapters of this volume. Crucially, the frame highlights that relative group differences over time and across countries are configured at the intersections of family, market, and state institutions.

Much research in this area, including some of the chapters in this volume, implicitly or explicitly view recent family changes as examples of the “pathology of patriarchy” first raised in Moynihan’s 1965 report on *The Negro Family: The Case for National Action*. The basis of this perspective is the strong and persistent correlation between female-headed families and negative outcomes for children (McLanahan, Tach, and Schneider 2013). The point to stress, though, is that these ill effects are particularly acute in the United States with its unique ideological acceptance of large class, gender, racial, and other group inequalities. As revealed in this and other chapters in the book, the magnitude of the family changes and especially their negative outcomes varies across cultural, economic, and political contexts.

The second goal of this chapter is to argue that the pattern of this cross-context variation does not point to an inherent pathology of patriarchy. Indeed, the differences in life chances across family types are minimized where institutional arrangements, unlike in the United States, support greater gender along with class equality (Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado, forthcoming). Furthermore, gendered responses to the inter-related institutional changes over the past half

century suggest instead it is the pathology of *patriarchy* disproportionately hurting the life chances of boys and men. I draw broadly on Connell (1987; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) to define patriarchy as men's historically institutionalized dominance over women in the family, labor market, and state.<sup>1</sup> As the institutional support for patriarchy gives way, a sizeable minority of men struggle to adapt in healthy ways, undermining family formation and stability.

Next I outline the conceptual frame for situating family processes and outcomes in their institutional contexts. Then I use the existing literature and other chapters in this book to highlight how structural changes over the past half-century make patriarchal assumptions untenable for a growing proportion of men. In conclusion, I argue that only fully institutionalizing gender equality will minimize negative outcomes associated with family change. In part, fully-institutionalized gender equality ensures children have access to more economic and emotional resources regardless of family form. More importantly, fully-institutionalized gender equality encourages development of new normative masculinities that support greater family stability in evolving institutional contexts.

## **Dynamic institutional intersections**

Figure 1 diagrams the “nested intersections” of institutions, family processes, and child and adult outcomes. The first box in the diagram indicates the socio-economic structures that affect family formation and dissolution noted in the second box, which create the group differences in inequalities in individual outcomes outlined in the lower box. The structural effects occur at the

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<sup>1</sup> Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinities from which I derive this definition of patriarchy not only incorporates the institutionalized patriarchal power relations between men and women, but also the sexual, class, and racial-ethnic hierarchies among men vis-à-vis a hegemonic ideal (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Fully explicating this theoretically vis-à-vis further group differences in family inequalities is beyond the scope of this chapter.

intersections of family, market, and state institutions in a dynamic interplay that varies across and within national contexts over time.

Intersectionality is not commonly used to refer to institutional effects. Conventionally, intersectionality is a feminist paradigm emphasizing that no single master social category such as gender or class grasps the different experiences and social locations of all group members (McCall 2005). Consequently, intersectionality demands that we consider identities and experiences at the intersection of an individual's group memberships (Collins 1991; McCall 2005). Hence, Figure 1 includes a shaded circle spanning institutions, family processes, and outcomes to indicate that effects vary at the intersection of an individual's gender, class, race-ethnicity, immigrant status, sexual orientation, and the like. Due to space constraints, discussion in this chapter is primarily limited to gender and class differences, with education used as the main proxy for class.

Similarly, no master institution accounts for institutional effects on people's lives. Instead, individual and group differences are nested in the intersections of family, market, and state institutions, and supra-national institutions such as the European Union and World Bank. This may seem like common sense, but bears emphasizing when comparing possible causes and consequences of family inequalities across Europe and the Americas as done in this book. For example, the institution of family includes norms about what or who constitutes a family, along with the expected behavior of family members. During early industrialization, the patriarchal heterosexual, nuclear, male breadwinner/female carer model of family became hegemonic in many, but not all Western economies.

Men's economic dominance under this model was theoretically enshrined in U.S. economist Gary Becker's (1981) specialization theory of family. Becker argued that families in

industrial societies optimize household production and reproduction when one partner specializes in paid work and the other in unpaid family work such as housework and childcare. The math behind the theory is gender-neutral in that either partner could specialize in paid or unpaid work depending on their individual aptitudes and preferences. But, reflecting the patriarchal world in which he was raised, Becker (1981) ultimately concluded women's childbearing gives them a comparative advantage in family work, whereas the gender wage gap indicates men's comparative advantage in employment. Governments in most, but not all, countries reinforced the patriarchal order in the post-World War II expansion of employment-based welfare provisions payable to the primary breadwinner (Cooke 2011).

[Figure 1 about here]

Perpetuation of the male breadwinner model of family, though, requires a labor market that enables all members of a family to survive on a single income. This became possible for the newly-created European and North American middle classes beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century (Cooke 2011). The possibility extended to the working classes as well in the brief post-war period when workers enjoyed the fruits of their growing productivity (Cherlin 2014; Gottschalk and Smeeding 1997). Since then, the evolution from industrial to post-industrial labor markets made the patriarchal male breadwinner model of family increasingly unsustainable.

De-industrialization and de-unionization made less-skilled men the first to lose their ability to support a family. High-wage manufacturing jobs disappeared, replaced by growing employment in low-wage service sector jobs (Carlson, this volume; Cherlin 2014). Neoliberal policies exacerbated less-skilled workers' labor market losses. For instance, in a bid to enhance employer flexibility in competitive global markets, some governments eased employment protections and allowed the real value of minimum wages to fall (Immervoll 2007). Wage

inequalities widened further as returns to a university degree sharply increased beginning in the 1980s in the United States and Great Britain, and in the 1990s in other Western countries (Gottschalk and Smeeding 1997; Machin 2010).

Nonetheless, the middle classes are not safe either. Since the late 1980s, technological expansion has led to falling employment shares among middle-waged occupations in North America (Autor 2010) and Europe (Goos, Manning, and Salomons 2009). But the specific pattern of polarization varies across Western labor markets, as indicated in Table 1. The loss of middle-waged occupations in Austria, France, and Italy was off-set by strong growth in the highest-waged occupations. In contrast, the middle-wage job loss in Finland and Norway was off-set by growth in only low-wage occupations. In the UK as in the United States (Autor 2010), shrinking middle-wage employment was off-set by approximately equal growth in both low- and high-wage jobs.

Consequently, to varying degrees, post-industrial labor markets no longer support the patriarchal male breadwinner model as did the post-war labor markets. In almost every OECD country, the employment rate of prime-age (25 to 54) men decreased since the 1970s (OECD 2016; see also Eberstadt, this volume). The trajectories of younger adults making critical decisions about education, employment, and family are more precarious than at any other time during the past half century (Eurofound 2016). The evolving labor markets, coupled with cultural and policy shifts, eroded men's comparative advantage in employment. Simultaneously, gendered divisions of paid work narrowed.

### **Evolving family divisions of labor**

Any gender and other group hierarchies embedded in the institution of family are constantly contested (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Ferree 2010). In 1963, Friedan's book on *The*



*Feminine Mystique* struck a chord with Western housewives who felt trapped, alienated, and vulnerable inside their homes and economically dependent on husbands. Friedan (1963) called for a revolution, for women to seize education and return to paid work. Friedan's timing was perfect, coinciding with the introduction of the birth control pill, coupled with the easing of anti-contraception laws in many Western nations (Cooke 2011).

Women particularly embraced higher education. By the 1990s, women's educational attainment in most Western countries had caught up with men's. By 2011, college attainment among women aged 25 – 34 exceeded that of men in 28 of 34 OECD countries (OECD 2013). A consistent pattern across countries is that educated women are more likely to be employed than less-educated women (Cooke 2011; Harkness 2013; Pettit and Hook 2009). Nevertheless, growth of the service sector expanded job opportunities for less-skilled women, who take these jobs more often than similarly-skilled men (OECD 2016). Consequently, and in contrast to men, women's labor force participation rates steadily increased from the 1970s, as shown in Table 2.

The intersection of the state with family and market institutions is evident in the regional variation in these trends. As noted earlier, most post-war welfare state policies reinforced a male breadwinner model. The exception to this was the Nordic model offering extensive policy supports for maternal employment such as public provision of childcare and paid parental leave (Cooke and Baxter 2010). Consequently, Finnish and Swedish women's labor force participation rates already exceeded 70% in 1975. The link between women's education and employment is also weaker in these more egalitarian countries (Harkness 2013; Pettit and Hook 2009). At the other end of the policy spectrum, the very low 1975 labor force participation rates of Dutch, Italian, and Spanish women reflected the national policy reinforcement of the male breadwinner model at that time.

The power of policy to change behavior across diverse cultural and historical contexts is evident in the wake of the European Union's 2000 Lisbon Treaty. The Lisbon Treaty contained an explicit goal of 60% female labor force participation in all member states by 2010, supported by expansion of public childcare and other family policies found in the Nordic model.<sup>2</sup> The over-time trends presented in Table 2 indicate the Lisbon strategy had some success. By 2015, the labor force participation rate of women in almost all European countries exceeded that in the United States. Yet one downside of the employment growth in the service economy is the increase in part-time rather than full-time jobs. In all countries, women are more likely than men to work part-time. Still, the percentage of women's total employment that is part-time varies from a low of 7.4% in the Czech Republic to a high of more than 60% among Dutch women (Table 2).

[Table 2 about here]

Persistent gender differences in hours employed contributes to the persistent gender wage gap in median earnings, indicated in the final column of Table 2. Even in the Nordic countries, the gender wage gap varies from a low of 6% in Norway, to a high of 20% in Finland. Finland's gender wage gap is in fact larger than the gender wage gap in the less regulated British and U.S. economies. Nevertheless, women's gains in employment and relative earnings over the past half century are extraordinary, although gender employment equality remains elusive under even the most supportive policy framework to date.

One likely reason women made greater employment gains over the past few decades as compared with men is because of their greater predilection for education. Women might also

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<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201107/20110718ATT24270/20110718ATT24270EN.pdf>

navigate changing labor markets more successfully than men because of the growing employer demand for social in conjunction with cognitive skills (Deming 2015). The gender response to U.S. job polarization provides an example of women's better adaptation. The decrease in middle-wage employment between 1979 and 2007 was more than twice as large for U.S. women as men, 15.8% versus 7%, respectively (Autor 2010: 10). Nevertheless, female employment overwhelmingly moved up the occupational wage distribution as middle-wage employment fell (Autor 2010). The decrease in U.S. men's middle-wage employment led to a more even split in employment growth in men's low- and high-wage occupations (Autor 2010). This highlights that the most skilled men continue to make gains in the new economy, sustaining their advantage over high-skilled women. But Autor (2010) found evidence of losses even among university-educated men, more of whom became employed in middle- and low-wage occupations. Future comparative work is needed to confirm whether these gender differences occurred in countries with varying patterns of polarization.

In any event, changing gender divisions of paid labor require some adaptation in how unpaid family work gets done. In this area as well, women have made greater behavioral changes than men. Unfortunately, men's failure to become full partners in unpaid family work encourages greater class inequality among women within and across labor markets.

#### *Gender-class redistribution of unpaid work*

Goldscheider and Sassler (this volume) laud the continuing gender revolution indicated by slow but somewhat steady increases in Western men's unpaid childcare, most recently among less-educated men who historically professed the most conservative gender attitudes. Yet the decrease in women's total domestic time during the revolution has been greater than the increase in men's (Kan, Sullivan, and Gershuny 2011). Multinational time diary data from the early 1970s

through the early 2000s are available for the Netherlands, Norway, the UK, and United States. These data show that women in these countries on average reduced their 337 minutes per day of housework and childcare by 60 minutes between the two time periods (Kan, et al. 2011: 236). Men in these countries increased their 117 minutes per day domestic contribution by 40 minutes across the period (Kan, et al. 2011: 236).

Not even the Nordic model has yet to eliminate gender inequality in unpaid work. Norwegian women in the early 2000s spent a similar amount of time as U.S. women doing daily domestic tasks (Kan, et al. 2011). Divisions were slightly more equal in Sweden, but because Swedish women spent appreciably less time doing these tasks than Norwegian or U.S. women. The net result of these over-time shifts is that partnered women in all countries still perform 60% or more of household unpaid work (Kan, et al. 2011). If future progress continues at the same rate as past progress—and this is a big “if” that Goldscheider and Sassler fully embrace—gender equality in unpaid work would not be achieved for another half century (Kan, et al. 2011).

The void created by men’s failure to contribute fully to family unpaid work is filled by the service sector, encouraging a growing class divide in women’s domestic equality gains. Gupta and his colleagues (2010) found that high-wage German, Swedish, and U.S. women spend significantly less time doing routine housework than their lower-waged peers. The institutional context matters, as differences among women are greater where aggregate income inequality is greater as in the United States (Gupta, et al. 2010). The demand for market substitutes for domestic work is undoubtedly one driver of the low-wage job growth in Great Britain and the United States.

Class and also racial-ethnic divisions among women increasingly span continents, as the use of migrant domestic workers in affluent economies surged since the 1990s (Williams 2012;

Zimmerman, Litt, and Bose 2006). This includes an increase in the Nordic countries after governments introduced cash transfers to reduce the high cost of providing public care services (Williams 2012). As a result, the number of migrant care workers increased in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden as well as other European and North American countries (Williams 2012; Zimmerman, et al. 2006).

The growth in migrant care work highlights that family inequalities in paid and unpaid work span first and third world countries. If women in affluent economies struggle to balance employment and family, imagine the challenges for women doing so across national borders. Regardless of the care drain migrant work imposes on families in the sending countries, many governments actively encourage the migration of women over men (Williams 2012; Zimmerman, et al. 2006). This is because migrant women on average send more of their earnings back to their families, which improves the national balance of payments required under international financial aid packages (Zimmerman, et al. 2006). Migrant male workers, in contrast, are more likely to spend more of their earnings in the host country (Zimmerman, et al. 2006).<sup>3</sup>

Despite the downsides, all of the trends indicate that a growing number of women worldwide increasingly take advantage of post-industrial global labor markets. Of course, the highest-skilled men still benefit the most, but global markets increasingly tip the employment balance in favor of moderate- and less-skilled women over similar men. Global markets also allow high-wage women to fill the care deficit created by men's limited unpaid work by purchasing support from less-advantaged women. At the same time, the proportion of younger

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<sup>3</sup> This gender difference in family expenditures is not unique to the third world. Lundberg and colleagues' (1997) analysis of British family cash transfers found that expenditures on children's clothing increased when women received the transfers rather than men.

less-skilled women continues to shrink at a faster rate than men's (OECD 2013). Policies also nudge women more than men. These evolving institutional effects shaping gender equality at its intersection with class (and race-ethnicity) are brought to bear on family formation patterns.

### **Institutional effects on class inequalities in family forms**

Becker (1981, 1985) believed that the mutual dependence created by gender specialization in paid or unpaid work enhances marital stability and fertility. Certainly, the three-institutional reinforcement of Becker's patriarchal model in the post-war decades reinforced a family formation sequence of marriage, childbearing, and children being raised by the two biological parents. This anomalous period in modern industrial history comprised the "golden age of marriage" in Western societies (Festy 1980). Couples married earlier, leading to a spike in fertility in many countries (Van Bavel and Reher 2013). Whether the sequence reflected choice or constraint is debatable. Few women had the independent economic resources to remain single or to leave an unhappy or abusive marriage. Conception outside of marriage was deeply stigmatizing for both the mother and the child, and most often resulted in either a "shot-gun" wedding or putting the child up for adoption.

Yet institutional intersections are dynamic. They vary across countries at any given point in time, as well as over time within countries. Esteve and Paredes (this volume) note that marriage was not historically pre-eminent in Central and Latin America. Instead, cohabitation and union instability were structural dimensions of family life when marriage reached its zenith in the West (Esteve and Paredes, this volume). During that time in the West, pronatalist policies combined with supports for maternal employment in Nordic and socialist countries correlated with higher nonmarital fertility rates (Cooke 2011; Perelli-Harris, this volume). Relatedly,

cohabitation in social-democratic Denmark and Sweden began to increase in the 1960s, a decade ahead of other countries in Europe (Hall and White 2005: 30).

Over the past 50 years, more women throughout Europe and the Americas cohabit rather than marry and raise children outside of marriage whether because of divorce or nonmarital childbearing (Carlson, this volume; Esteve and Paredes, this volume; Perelli-Harris, this volume). What intrigues or worries many social scientists and policy makers are the educational and/or racial-ethnic disparities in these family patterns that reflect and/or magnify inequalities among families. For most whites in the United States and non-Nordic European countries, *avant-garde* family arrangements in the 1960s such as cohabitation or divorce were the purview of a small elite. As alternative family forms became more culturally acceptable and legally possible, Goode (1970) anticipated they would become more prevalent among the less- rather than highly-educated. His prediction has largely been borne out, although educational gradients in marriage, cohabitation, nonmarital childbearing, and divorce vary in their institutional context (Carlson, this volume).

Within a patriarchal structure, men's economic capacity predicted by education still plays an important role in women's family choices as Cherlin argues here and elsewhere (Cherlin 2014). For example, Cherlin (this volume) attributes changes in the educational gradient in U.S. single motherhood to the disparate gender earnings effects of job polarization. His *prima facie* case seems convincing. Recall that moderately-educated women improved their earnings position in response to polarization while that of moderately-educated men deteriorated (Autor 2010). The percentage of U.S. children living with moderately-educated single mothers increased in each decade since the 1980s, whereas that for both the least- and most-educated women remained fairly stable since the 1990s (Cherlin, this volume).

But education predicts much more than economic outcomes—even in the United States—that also have a bearing on family commitment and stability. These associations should not be given short shrift in discussions of educational gradients in family formation because they offer much deeper insights as to the causes as well as consequences of observed family patterns. To date, Kalmijn (2013) is the only demographer to explore the interplays between the institutional context and the possible meanings of education behind the gradients.

*Beyond the economics of education*

Kalmijn (2013) noted that education predicts not only economic prospects, but more egalitarian attitudes as well. He subsequently hypothesized that the degree of gender inequality in a society determines which aspect of education accounts for educational gradients in family formation (Kalmijn 2013). In the 26 European countries analyzed, Kalmijn found that highly-educated women in male breadwinner contexts were less likely to have ever married and, if they married, more likely to have divorced. In contrast, less-educated women in these contexts have fewer non-marital economic alternatives and hence were more likely to have married and less likely to have divorced. Education had little impact on men's marriage or divorce risks (Kalmijn 2013). This pattern is consistent with the educational scenarios in the United States at the height of the 1950's male breadwinner model.

In more egalitarian contexts, however, highly-educated women *and* men were more likely to have married and less likely to have divorced (Kalmijn 2013).<sup>4</sup> Kalmijn (2013) also found that highly-educated individuals were more likely to be married to one another as gender

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<sup>4</sup> These results are consistent with Cooke et al.'s (2013) comparative study of harmonized national panel data, which reported that the reduction in divorce risk predicted by a wife's university degree was about as great in Finland, Norway, and Sweden as in the United States.



equality increased. He concluded the stronger effect of men's education on marriage in egalitarian countries relates to its cultural rather than economic implications. Educated women married educated men because the latter are more involved in childcare and hold more egalitarian attitudes about their wives' employment (Kalmijn 2013).

Missing from Kalmijn's study due to data limitations are the many other characteristics associated with education that also affect marriage probabilities. Lower education predicts a range of problems, from disability and poor health (Eurofound 2016), to greater illicit drug use and binge drinking, particularly among young men (Duncan, Wilkinson, and England 2006). Men with less education are more likely to commit domestic violence as well (Aizner 2010; Costa, et al. 2016).

These associations do not mean that forcing men to gain additional education will reduce the negative behaviors, as the causal arrow goes in the other direction. Behavioral and socio-emotional factors account for both education and employment outcomes, and behavioral problems are more prevalent among boys than girls (see Bertrand and Pan 2013). Once young adults are engaged in illicit behaviors, they are the most difficult to reach with any education, training, or employment program (Eurofound 2016). At the same time, Cherlin (2014) summarized U.S. qualitative research indicating that the persistent pressure on less-skilled men to fulfill the elusive patriarchal economic norm pushes them into illicit activities. This suggests outdated patriarchal norms do not support positive employment behavior among men.

Some academics and policy makers believe marriage "improves" men by encouraging them to give up bad habits and encourage their efforts to earn more money under the male breadwinner norm (Wilcox and Price, this volume). For example, many studies find that married men earn more than either their single or divorced counterparts (Ahituv and Lerman 2007),

although the magnitude of this marriage premium varies across countries (Schoeni 1995) and among men within countries (Cooke 2014). But a growing body of research finds that it is more a case of “better” men selecting into marriage rather than a causal effect of marriage. Duncan and his colleagues (2006) found that U.S. men’s legal and illegal substance abuse significantly decreased before entering cohabitation or marriage, not after. In Norway, men who ultimately married had chosen higher-wage occupations years before they partnered (Petersen, Penner, and Høgnnes 2014). Consequently, partnered men did not earn higher wages as compared with single men in the same occupations (Petersen, et al. 2014). Similarly, U.S. men tend to marry during periods of high wage growth, which plateaus (Dougherty 2006; Killewald and Lundberg 2017) or even declines after the year of marriage (Loughran and Zissimopoulos 2009).

All in all, more desirable men are selected into stable marriages, either because men who are particularly keen to have a family actively prepare for it earlier in the life course, or because savvy women actively pursue such men for marriage. Women who remain in education have the greatest opportunity to meet a large number of potentially desirable partners over several years before deciding on one. As societal gender equality increases and cultural norms about family evolve, less-educated women feel less compelled to legally commit to someone from their pool of likely partners. Less-educated women do marry, of course. But women most frequently cite drug or alcohol abuse, domestic violence, as well as poor employment prospects as reasons for divorce (Härkönen 2014). The greater likelihood of these family-deleterious behaviors among less-educated men therefore contributes to educational gradients in marriage as well as divorce.

### *Patriarchy versus gender equality*

The body of evidence outlined above suggests the patriarchal norm of fathers as economic heads of households is incongruous with the educational and employment trends that highlight growing

female advantage among low- to moderately-educated adults. Men's paid work is still important for family formation and stability, but it is increasingly important for women as well. For example, studies cited in Cooke and Baxter (2010) found that the unemployment of either husbands *or* wives increased the risk of divorce in Finland and Norway. What is at odds with labor market trends is the assumption of men's wage advantage over women in general and their opposite-sex partner specifically.

A further problem with the patriarchal norm is that it precludes equally-valued roles for men's expressive as well as economic contribution to family. Indeed, a new norm of family men as emotionally engaged and domestically involved has become pervasive since the 1970s, but it still sits subordinate to the patriarchal norm of breadwinning (Gerson 1993; Segal 2007). As long as the patriarchal norm dominates, couples will find it culturally difficult to enact different divisions of household labor that might better suit their individual capabilities within post-industrial markets. Goldscheider and Sassler (this volume) discuss the compelling evidence that men in particular would enact more egalitarian domestic divisions if they believe that other men support these. This highlights that even the most entrenched norms of masculinity can shift with public support from other men.

The economic and social trends together suggest that full institutional support for gender equality will ultimately support greater family stability in the post-industrial global economy. There is already some evidence that this is the case among younger cohorts. For example, U.S. marriages where the woman has more education than the man are no longer more likely to divorce as they were a generation or two ago (Schwartz and Han 2014). At the same time, a U.S. wife's employment still increases the risk of divorce (Cooke, et al. 2013; Killewald 2016). This contrasts, however, with the effect of wives' employment in countries with greater policy

support for equality. In Finland, Norway, and Sweden, wives' employment in fact lowers the risk of divorce (Cooke, et al. 2013). Even within the United States, Cooke (2006) found that first marriages were most stable when couples had more equal divisions of paid and unpaid work. The optimal mix during the 1990s was when the wife contributed 40% to family earnings and the man 40% to unpaid domestic tasks (Cooke 2006).

But it would be naïve to expect a smooth or rapid normative transition from patriarchal dominance to egalitarianism, particularly when some view the changes as entailing loss of public and private power. As noted by Carlson (this volume), cohabitation in lieu of marriage is widespread across the more egalitarian Nordic countries and cohabiting unions everywhere are less stable than married ones. In addition, Carlson's (Figure 3) data showed that the 2014 divorce rate per 1000 people was higher in Denmark than in the notoriously divorce-prone United States. Even when limiting comparisons to the smaller proportion of Nordic couples who marry, Finnish and Swedish divorce rates are among the top of the list, although not as high as in the United States and Russia (Fahey 2014: Figure 2).

In addition, other signs point to greater benefits of institutionalizing gender equality over patriarchy. Aizner (2010) found that U.S. domestic violence decreased when the gender wage gap decreased, whereas a traditional grab for patriarchal power would have predicted an increase. Esping-Andersen and Billari (2015) highlight the recovery in fertility rates in the Nordic countries as compared with persistent low fertility in more gender-traditional European contexts.

Further aggregate evidence of a positive link between gender equality and partnered households is contained in Table 3. The first column displays the United Nations' Gender Inequality Index rating for numerous countries in Europe and the Americas. The index rates

countries on women's reproductive health, empowerment, and economic status,<sup>5</sup> and ranges from zero, indicating perfect gender equality, to one, indicating extreme gender inequality. The ratings confirm the high degree of gender equality in the Nordic countries, along with the Netherlands and Germany. Most of the rest of Europe along with Canada have moderately high gender equality, whereas it is noticeably lower in Hungary, the UK and United States. It is lowest in familistic Latin America.

The second column displays the percentage of children under the age of 17 who are living in a single-mother household. The percentage is smallest in Greece at less than 4% and greatest in Colombia and the Dominican Republic where more than one quarter of children reside with a lone mother. The UK and United States are more similar to Latin America, with more than one-fifth of young children residing in single-mother households. Overall, the percentage of children residing in single mother households increases as gender *inequality* increases (correlation 0.64,  $p < .000$ ).

[Table 3 about here]

Whether institutionalized gender equality or patriarchy supports greater family stability in post-industrial societies is much more than an academic debate. The core issue behind the debate is the relationship between family forms and the individual outcomes noted in the bottom box of Figure 1 (see also Reeves, this volume). A sizeable literature documents that father absence predicts greater risks of behavioral, educational, and employment problems in the next generation. My final argument, building on an insight from Moynihan, is that any pathology

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<sup>5</sup> Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rates; empowerment includes the proportion of parliamentary seats occupied by women along with the proportion of adult men and women aged 25 and older with at least some secondary education; and economic status encompasses the labor force participation rate of female and male populations aged 15 years and older. See <http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/gender-inequality-index-gii> for more detail.

associated with residing in single-mother households is an artifact of patriarchy that limits these households' access to resources. Proof of this conjecture is that the negative outcomes are minimized where cultural, market, and state institutions instead support greater gender equality.

### **Institutional intersections and group differences in family outcomes**

Senator Moynihan's 1965 report for the U.S. Department of Labor brought discussion of child outcomes associated with single-mother households into the public debate. In that report, he noted the very high divorce and nonmarital birth rates among African American families as compared with whites, and the strong correlations between father absence and children's low intelligence scores, school truancy, crime, drug addiction, etc. (Moynihan 1965). There were very strong educational gradients in effects that he attributed to the deep-seated U.S. racism undermining African American men's access to education and employment and, in turn, their relative employment advantage over African American women. Moynihan (1965:29) concluded the poor intergenerational outcomes were indicative of the "pathology of patriarchy" within a society that presumed and rewarded male leadership in public and private life. Moynihan did not consider patriarchy superior or inevitable, just normative at the time. One of his key insights was that it was the mismatch between individual and current normative circumstances that accounted for the ill effects, not a pathology inherent to patriarchy.

In this chapter I detailed the similar dismantling of economic rewards since Moynihan wrote his report for a growing proportion of men based on education, along with the sizeable increase in women's public participation and private power. Yet the assumed pathology of patriarchy persists in much of the U.S. literature even as accumulating evidence indicates norms are giving way to more gender egalitarian family arrangements. McLanahan (2004) gave it a

less provocative name of “diverging destinies,” with the likelihood of father absence predicated on mothers’ education rather than race-ethnicity.<sup>6</sup>

To be sure, studies from a range of Western countries confirm that parental separation and subsequent family transitions predict some risk of negative effects on children’s psychological well-being, behavior, grades, test scores, educational attainment, own early onset of sexual activity, early childbearing, and risk of divorce in adulthood (Garriga and Berta, this volume; Härkönen, Bernardi, and Boertien 2017; McLanahan, et al. 2013; Perelli-Harris, this volume). McLanahan (2004) contends the negative outcomes derive from the lesser resources of single-parent households, in terms of both money and parental attention. As less-educated women are more likely to be single parents, their children face a larger resource deficit.

Confirming the causal direction of effects, however, is tricky (Autor, et al. 2016; Perelli-Harris, this volume). Lower socio-economic status already predicts worse outcomes for children whether in two- or single-parent households. Another possibility is that some other characteristic might account for both family instability and children’s outcomes (Autor, et al., 2016; Perelli-Harris, this volume). Analyses controlling for children’s stable unobserved characteristics, prior behavior, or school performance indeed find smaller effects than when comparing across children (Härkönen, et al. 2017; McLanahan, et al. 2013). In other words, these children would have done worse regardless of family structure.

Furthermore, like patriarchy, the negative effects associated with spending time in a single-mother household are not inevitable. Most studies report “average” effects. In all countries, a sizeable minority if not majority of children experiencing family instability do just

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<sup>6</sup> Others point out that the educational gradients mainly mask the institutionalized racial-ethnic disadvantage originally noted by Moynihan (Autor, et al. 2016; Esteve and Paredes, this volume; Garriga and Berta, this volume).

fine or perhaps better than had their fathers been present (Härkönen, et al. 2017). Furthermore, more redistributive welfare states and greater policy support for maternal employment minimize the negative intergenerational effects because they increase available resources (Härkönen, et al. 2017; Nieuwenhuis and Maldonado, forthcoming). In Europe, this realization resulted in the adoption of a policy discourse around social investment rather than social protection (Jenson 2009). Whereas traditional welfare policies aimed to reduce current family poverty, social investment policies aim to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty (Jenson 2009). The goal is to ensure current and future employment growth within a (skilled) knowledge economy (Bonoli 2005). Patterned on the Nordic model, social investment policies stress greater education and skills for the next generation, simultaneous with current high levels of female labor force participation facilitated by more policy supports for employed parents and carers (Bonoli 2005; Jenson 2009).

The impact of public investment on families' economic resources is evident in the final three columns of Table 3. The third column indicates the percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) spent on family transfers in each of the countries (information not available for Latin America). Note the particularly low level of U.S. public investment (0.7% of GDP in 2010) as compared with Europe and Canada. With this low level of public investment comes a high level of poverty even among U.S. two-parent households—commensurate with the far less affluent Mediterranean countries struggling under austerity measures. The poverty rate for U.S. single-mother households was a staggering 45.9% in 2010, exceeding that of any country in the table except Peru. In contrast, poverty rates of single-mother households in the redistributive Nordic countries were on average similar to the U.S. poverty rate for two-parent households.



These aggregate differences manifest at the individual level. McLanahan and colleagues' (2013) review consistently found significant negative effects of father absence on U.S. children's educational and mental health outcomes, but effects were often weaker or entirely absent in other countries. For example, the educational penalty for father absence is twice as large in the United States as in Germany or the UK (Bernardi and Boertien 2017). What research is just beginning to untangle is how child outcomes differ systematically at the intersection of gender and class (and race-ethnicity).

#### *Gender-class gaps in effects*

Ascertaining possible gender or class differences in the impact of family structure on child outcomes is difficult because both characteristics predict behavioral and educational differences irrespective of family structure. As already mentioned, children benefit from economic and parental resources, the level of which increases as parents' education increases. Consequently children of less-educated parents on average have more behavioral problems and complete less education than children of highly-educated parents. Whether father absence magnifies this class disadvantage is unclear.

Two recent literature reviews found that approximately half of the reviewed studies concluded that children of less-educated single parents fare worse, whereas the other half concluded that the absence of a highly-educated father is more detrimental (Härkönen, et al. 2017; McLanahan, et al. 2013). Bernardi and Boertien (2017) contend the varying conclusions stem from the different methods used in the analyses. Once controlling for this, they found that father absence had the least impact on the educational attainment of children of less-educated mothers in Germany, Italy, the UK, and United States (Bernardi and Boertien 2017). Whether

future research with similar attention to methodological issues will reinforce this conclusion is an empirical question.

Gender differences in the impact of residing with a single mother are apparent, however, at least in the United States. These develop from biological differences wherein boys do worse than girls on a range of non-cognitive measures affecting school success (Bertrand and Pan 2013). U.S. boys are more likely than girls to be diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and have lower levels of inhibitory control and perceptual sensitivity, which equates to greater aggression (see Bertrand and Pan 2013). U.S. girls also have a slight but reliable advantage in delaying gratification (Silverman 2003, cited in Bertrand and Pan 2013). Bertrand and Pan (2013) contend that some of the growing gender differences in educational attainment discussed earlier can be traced to these non-cognitive gender differences in children.

The source of the gender behavioral differences may be biological, but as with all essentialist differences, behaviors are responsive to environmental factors. U.S. evidence indicates that boys' outcomes deteriorate further with the reduction in parenting resources of single-mother households (Bertrand and Pan 2013; Cooper, et al. 2011). Not only is there just one parent, but single U.S. mothers engage less with boys than girls from a very young age, although parental time investment increases with mothers' education (Bertrand and Paul 2013). Consequently, U.S. girls generally fare better than boys in single-parent households. Girls' greater resilience in the face of family change contributes to their educational success and adaptability to changing labor markets that demand high skills (Bertrand and Pan 2013).

Looking at effects at the intersection of gender and class using detailed Florida student records, Autor and colleagues (2016) found that the gender gaps in academic and behavioral outcomes in both single- and two-parent families shrink as parental socio-economic status

increases. Overall, boys' outcomes are more strongly contingent on family structure as well as economic resources, although high-quality schools can somewhat narrow the gender gap (Autor, et al. 2016). The smaller impact of schools as well as neighborhoods on U.S. boys' behavioral and academic outcomes indicates that Reeves' (this volume) suggestion of sending disadvantaged children to boarding schools would not rectify the inequalities. Doing so may particularly harm boys because it would remove both parents from their daily lives.

These gender differences in child outcomes may be another case of U.S. exceptionalism, driven by the high levels of class and gender inequality in that country. Comparative research is needed to ascertain whether the more egalitarian policy contexts specifically minimize the negative impact of single motherhood on boys. It does seem likely that the perpetuation of the patriarchal norm in unequal contexts such as the United States contributes to the intergenerational gender differences. The expectation that men should be the primary family breadwinner in markets with a high degree of income inequality sharply reduces women's perceived benefit of committing to less-educated men. Men's failure to achieve the patriarchal ideal coupled with their biological predisposition to act out increases the risk they will engage in further negative behaviors that limit their time with residential or non-residential children. The next generation of boys suffers the most from father absence in contexts of high inequality, perpetuating the cycle of maladaptation as institutional support for patriarchal entitlement in the family, market, and state continues to ebb. However, the solution is not to return to the patriarchal system built on gender inequality. Instead, what is needed is to fully institutionalize gender equality in which new, more adaptive masculinities can develop.

## **Family futures: Making gender equality a “complete” institution**

In this chapter I highlighted how group inequalities configured at the intersections of family, market, and state institutions vary across place and evolve over time. My argument is that the institutional arrangements supporting patriarchy in the post-war decades have been crumbling for quite some time. A high-skill, technologically-driven global economy requires brains rather than brawn, and adaptable, socially-engaged service providers. In Western societies, many of the requisite traits are traditionally feminine. Indeed, in the past half-century we have seen a remarkable ascendancy of women in the economic, social, and political order.

As the new institutional order unfolds, the value of education continues to increase (Autor 2010; Gottschalk and Smeeding 1997; Machin 2010). Education not only imparts skills, but encourages more egalitarian attitudes and predicts more positive social behaviors as well. Yet men’s educational attainment has not kept pace with women’s over the past few decades. Consequently a sizable proportion of men struggle to adapt to the new socio-economic demands in and outside of the home.

The gender revolution is far from complete, but many women perceive themselves as sufficiently independent to go it alone at some stage of raising their children when their partners fall short of economic or behavioral expectations. Although much more comparative research is needed, available evidence finds that boys’ essentialist behavioral problems magnify when fathers are absent from the household. These behavioral problems eclipse boys’ educational development, which blunts the possibility that a larger proportion of the next generation can enjoy the greater family stability associated with greater educational attainment.

This vicious circle of intergenerational inequality down the male line does not indicate a pathology of matriarchy as initially suggested by Moynihan in the mid-1960s. It instead point to

the growing pathology of patriarchy in post-industrial economies, because better institutional supports for gender along with class equality yield the best intergenerational outcomes. The reason we have not yet eradicated the risks is because gender equality remains an “incomplete institution” even in the most progressive contexts. I borrow this term from Cherlin’s (1978) seminal article on remarriage after divorce. In that article, Cherlin argued that remarriages were less stable than first marriages because they lacked the institutional support in language, law, and custom that benefited first marriages. Similarly, I hold that the detrimental behaviors among boys and men will be staunch only once gender equality has become fully institutionalized in the family, market, and state. Institutionalizing gender equality eases the pressure on men to dominate paid work, allowing more adaptive masculinities to develop in which men’s equal contributions to both paid and unpaid work support family stability. I conclude with some brief thoughts on the major market and policy challenges to achieving this.

The first challenge is to enhance children’s and particularly boys’ educational engagement from pre-school that will carry them through to complete higher levels of education. This perspective is core to the EU’s social investment strategy. But as someone who worked on educational reform in her pre-academic career, I can attest that the challenge is not the what, but the how. Most compulsory educational systems developed with the assumption of an at-home mother (Cooke 2011), and that children would adapt to the school structures and processes. Both of these assumptions undermine academic achievement.

Instead, educational processes need to adapt to children’s and families’ needs. This includes additional public funding for more aides of both genders in the classroom, innovative approaches to curriculum delivery, high-quality care and learning opportunities before and after standard school days, further supports for children with any type of special need (including

behavioral), and coordinated extra-curricular activities that do not require parents to shuttle children to and from venues. These supports should extend through adolescence, during which young persons are at greatest risk of becoming NEET—not in education, employment, or training (Eurofound 2016).

The second challenge is that both parents need more workplace flexibility to ensure they can be actively involved in their children's daily lives. At present, organizations still reinforce patriarchal expectations of an ideal worker without competing family demands (Acker 2006). These expectations manifest in disparate gendered penalties when employees seek workplace flexibility. For example, one U.S. study found that male employees who experienced a family conflict received lower performance ratings and lower reward recommendations, whereas ratings of women were unaffected by family conflicts (Butler and Skattebo 2004).

There is also a strong class dimension to organizational gendered expectations. Glass (2004) found that mothers in professional or managerial occupations incurred slightly larger wage penalties when they worked reduced hours or worked from home, as compared with mothers in other occupations who took up similar workplace options. Similarly, Brescoll and colleagues (2013) found that employers were more likely to grant low- than high-status men's requests for flexible work schedules for family reasons. High-status men were more likely to be granted leave for career development (Brescoll, et al. 2013).

This nascent literature supports Goldscheider and Sassler's optimism that the second half of the gender revolution is now unfolding among less-educated couples, which should ultimately reduce educational gradients in marriage and divorce. At the same time, workplaces are stymying further gender equality progress among the more highly-educated, beyond providing market alternatives for domestic production that widen class gaps among women (Gupta, et al.

2010). Persistent patriarchal advantage at the top of the class hierarchy blocks the thorough institutionalization of gender equality. One way to quell this is with more aggressive redistributive tax policies, the proceeds of which could be fed into the educational system.

Also needed are more aggressive positive discrimination policies, but targeted at the top of the occupational structure. Affirmative action entered U.S. equality legislation with Johnson's 1965 Executive Order 11246, although it has subsequently come under fire as discriminating against unprotected groups. Positive discrimination is also allowed under the European Commission's 2006/54/EC directive on the implementation of the principle of equal opportunities and equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation. Again, however, many countries have argued against positive discrimination because in principle it violates men's rights to equality (Cooke 2011).

Gender equality at the executive level remains most elusive. The European Union is ahead of the Americas in tackling this with specific targets of increasing the percentage of women in key decision-making positions (European Commission 2016). In 2003, Norway mandated that 40% of non-executive board positions be filled by women. Although that controversial law is now considered a success, its implementation has not trickled down to increase the percentage of women in executive positions (Bertrand, et al. 2015). Women's ability to succeed when appointed to executive positions is contingent on eliminating the patriarchal organizational norms for executives as noted above.

The resistance to positive discrimination highlights the cultural resistance to fully disavowing patriarchy, a cultural resistance that has proven slow to change. Goldscheider and Sassler (this volume) discuss the gender essentialism behind such resistance, so I will not repeat the arguments here. But as they also argue and as indicated throughout this chapter, both

markets and policies can prod us further along the path to gender equality and, in turn, better family outcomes. Only when gender equality is fully institutionalized in markets and policies can the family, however configured, and all of its members, thrive.



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Figure 1      Nested intersections of institutions, family processes, and outcomes

(see separate file for print-ready version)

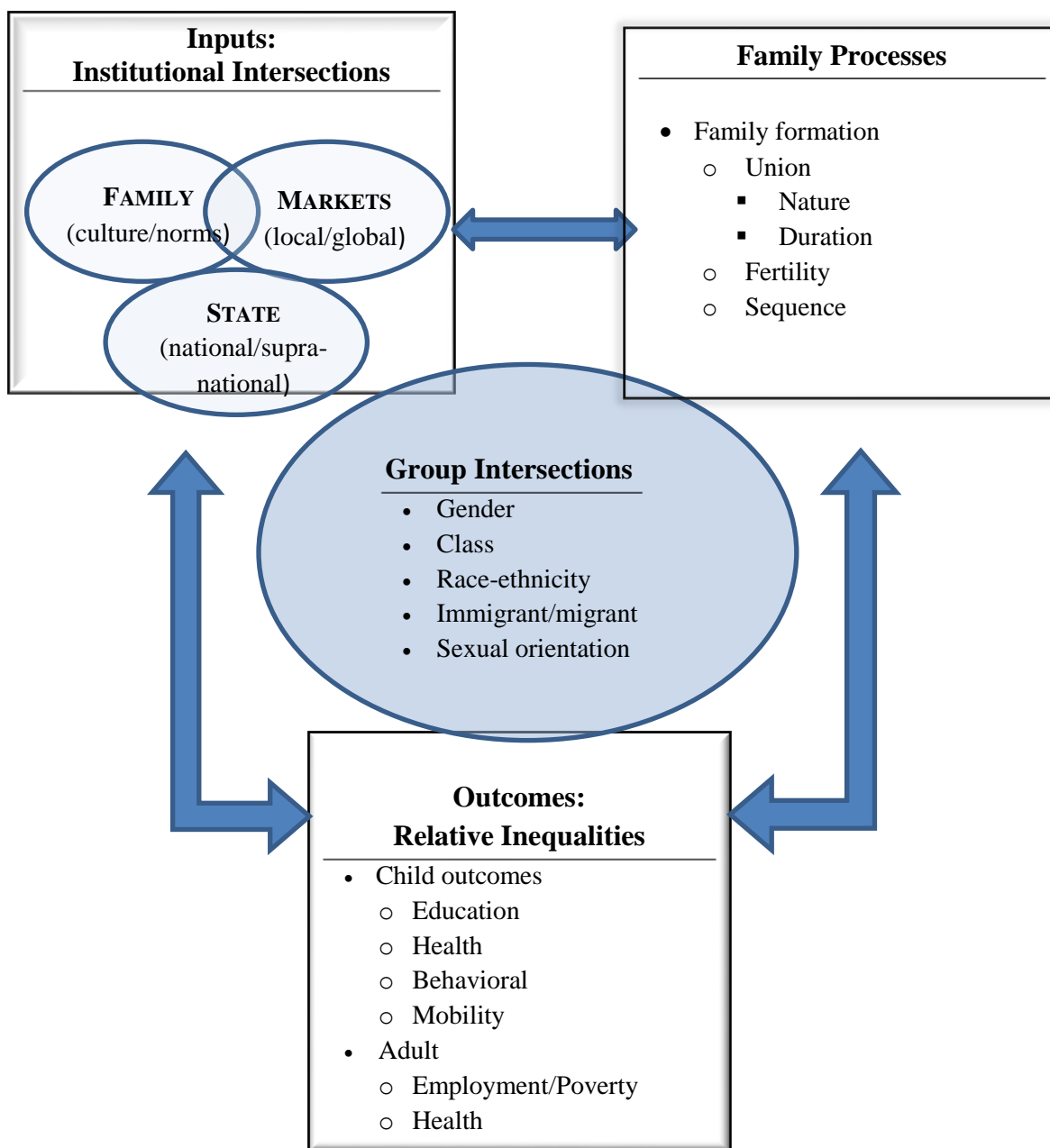


Table 1 Labor market polarization across Europe

	<b>SHARE OF HOURS WORKED</b>		
<i>1993-2006 percentage point change:</i>	<b>Four lowest-pay occupations</b>	<b>Nine middle-wage occupations</b>	<b>Eight highest-paying occupations</b>
<i>Continental northern Europe:</i>			
Austria	-0.59	-14.58	15.17
Belgium	1.48	-9.50	8.03
France	-0.74	-12.07	12.81
Germany	3.05	-8.71	5.67
Netherlands	2.27	-4.68	2.41
<i>Continental southern Europe:</i>			
Greece	1.75	-6.08	4.34
Italy	-8.20	-9.08	17.28
Portugal	2.39	-1.13	-1.26
Spain	0.96	-7.04	6.07
<i>Nordic</i>			
Denmark	-0.96	-7.16	8.13
Finland	6.66	-6.54	-0.12
Norway	4.96	-6.52	1.57
Sweden	1.90	-6.93	5.03
<i>English-speaking (liberal)</i>			
Ireland	6.19	-5.47	-0.72
UK	5.77	-10.32	4.55
<i>EU Average</i>	<i>1.58</i>	<i>-7.77</i>	<i>6.19</i>

*Source:* Adapted from Goos, Manning, and Salomons 2009: Table 2; used with permission.

Table 2 Female labor force participation rates over time (age 25 to 54)

	1975	1980	1990	2000	2010	2015	Part-time as % women's total 2015 employment	2014 Gender Wage Gap
Mexico	-	-	-	45.4	54.1	55.2	27.5	18%
Costa Rica	-	-	38.7	47.7	61.0	64.2	29.8	-
Canada		60.0	75.5	78.5	82.3	82.0	26.4	19
UK	-	-	73.0	76.2	78.6	80.0	37.7	17
USA	55.1	64.0	74.0	76.7	75.2	73.7	17.4	17
Belgium	-	-	60.8	72.7	80.4	80.2	30.2	6
France	-	-	72.2	78.6	83.4	83.0	22.3	14
Germany	52.8	56.6	63.4	76.9	81.3	82.5	37.4	17
Netherlands	28.5	36.7	58.5	72.7	82.3	82.1	60.7	19
Italy	31.3	39.9	53.9	57.9	64.5	65.9	32.8	6
Greece	-	-	51.5	62.0	72.4	77.7	16.3	9
Portugal	46.2	54.4	68.0	77.3	84.9	86.0	12.6	19
Spain	27.9	30.4	46.9	62.8	78.8	82.0	23.1	9
Czech Republic	-	-	-	81.8	79.8	81.4	7.4	16
Estonia	-	-	88.3	84.1	84.8	82.8	12.2	27
Denmark	-	-	87.8	84.0	85.3	83.4	25.8	7
Finland	78.5	82.7	86.4	85.0	84.4	83.5	16.4	20
Norway	55.3	68.9	79.2	83.5	84.4	83.9	27.6	6
Sweden	74.3	82.9	90.7	85.6	86.6	88.3	18.0	13

Source: From OECD statistics, <http://stats.oecd.org/>, accessed 26 March 2017. The gender wage gap is from OECD (2016: 239) and is unadjusted, calculated as the difference between the unadjusted median earnings of men and the median earnings of women, relative to the median earnings of men. Part-time employment from OECD (2016: 227).



Table 3 Gender inequality, social expenditures, and percent of children under 17 living in poverty in two- versus single-parent families, circa 2010

			Poverty Rates (%)		
	Gender Inequality Index	% children in single mother families	% GDP family transfers	Two- parent households	Single- mother households
Denmark	0.06	16.9	3.8	3.1	10.8
Finland	0.08	10.4	3.1	2.5	11.7
Norway	0.08	13.1	3.1	3.1	16.7
Sweden	0.05	18.0	3.4	3.3	10.4
Belgium	0.11	10.3	2.8	4.9	28.1
France	0.11	13.8	2.9	8.2	29.4
Germany	0.09	15.6	2.2	4.1	36.2
Greece	0.16	3.7	1.4	16.6	39.4
Italy	0.12	8.5	1.3	17.6	33.0
Netherlands	0.05	11.5	1.5	2.9	32.5
Spain	0.12	7.7	1.5	19.5	32.7
Czech Republic	0.14	12.2	2.4	7.4	32.2
Estonia	0.19	15.7	2.6	9.4	30.2
Hungary	0.24	14.6	3.4	11.5	18.6
UK	0.21	21.0	4.0	7.6	14.3
Canada	0.14	13.4	1.3	10.6	37.4
US	0.30	21.0	0.7	13.7	45.9
Brazil	0.45	19.2	*	27.8	40.5
Colombia	0.48	25.1	*	21.8	32.5
Dominican Republic	0.48	26.4	*	21.8	31.8
Guatemala	0.54	18.3	*	29.4	26.2
Mexico	0.45	16.0	1.1	25.3	22.3
Panama	0.49	22.6	*	29.7	38.9
Paraguay	0.48	17.6	*	27.6	33.8
Peru	0.42	16.2	*	30.7	52.0

Source: Gender Inequality Index (0 no inequality to 1 total inequality) from the 2010-2015 average from UN Human Development Report 2011:

[http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/271/hdr\\_2011\\_en\\_complete.pdf](http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/271/hdr_2011_en_complete.pdf); Social expenditure data for

2010 from OECD, <http://www.oecd.org/els/social/penditure>, retrieved 24 March 2017. Child poverty rates are the percent of children under 17 living in households with less than 50% median household income, from LIS Key Figures for 2010 or the next earlier wave, <http://www.lisdatacenter.org/lis-ikf-webapp/app/search-ikf-figures>, accessed 24 March 2017. Asterisk (\*) indicates information not available.